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8 September 1958

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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8 September 1958

DAILY BRIEF

25X1

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

OK
USSR: The Soviet 21st party congress, ordered to convene on 27 January, will probably be an important milestone in Khrushchev's movement toward full political control. Called to approve a new Seven-Year Plan, the congress will give Khrushchev the opportunity to revamp the membership of both the party central committee and its presidium.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

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Tunisia: [REDACTED] President Bourguiba has decided that Tunisia will join the Arab League, probably on 9 September. Bourguiba, who is reported annoyed that Morocco failed to consult with Tunisia before announcing its intention to join the league, believes that Tunisia cannot afford to be the only Arab state remaining outside. He hopes that, as a member, Tunisia may be able to exert a moderating influence in the Nasir-dominated league.

8 Sept 58

DAILY BRIEF

ii

N10 Nasir-Hammarskjold talks: Nasir was reportedly unwilling to agree to several of UN Secretary General Hammarskjold's proposals for elimination of tension between the UAR and Jordan. Cairo has taken the position that the UNGA Middle East resolution of 21 August was intended essentially to facilitate withdrawal of foreign troops. Nasir shows no inclination to meet King Husayn's desire for assurances of noninterference in Jordan before Husayn agrees to withdrawal of British troops. 25X1

III, THE WEST

OK Venezuela: The failure of a Venezuelan military coup on 7 September reflects the loyalty of the bulk of the armed forces to junta President Larrazabal, and the effectiveness of civilian strength as a checkmate to the threatened return of military dictatorship. 25X1

LATE ITEM

OK Khrushchev letter: In a letter to President Eisenhower on 7 September, Khrushchev warned that Moscow will view any attack on Communist China as an attack on the Soviet Union. This warning is probably intended to show the world that the Soviet and Chinese Communist leaders are fully prepared for a major test of strength with the United States. By thus attempting to heighten world-wide apprehension over the possibility of large-scale hostilities, Khrushchev--in the first official Soviet pronouncement since the beginning of the present Taiwan Strait crisis--probably hopes to induce allied and neutral governments to bring heavy pressure on the United States. The letter contained a hint that Khrushchev may later call for high-level

8 Sept 58

DAILY BRIEF

iii

negotiations between the United States, the USSR, Communist-
China, and other countries to consider ways of resolving Far
East tensions through "common efforts." [REDACTED]

8 Sept 58

DAILY BRIEF

iv

25X1

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Soviet Party Congress

The 21st Soviet party congress, called for 27 January, will probably be an important milestone in Khrushchev's movement toward full political control. Called to approve a new Seven-Year Plan, the congress will also give Khrushchev the opportunity to revamp both the central committee and its presidium. Conferences and elections in preparation for the congress will now be held at all levels in the party. The resulting personnel changes will not only provide clues as to the composition of the new central committee, but also will help to pinpoint those areas throughout the country where Khrushchev feels it necessary to strengthen his support.

No formal agenda for the congress has yet been published. Moscow has only announced that Khrushchev will report on the Seven-Year Plan and that "theses" on the plan will be published before the congress convenes. Normally, "draft directives" for long-term plans are issued. The use of the term "theses" may indicate that the new draft plan is more subject to discussion and revision than former draft directives, possibly reflecting continuing uncertainty over future economic policy. There have been recent suggestions that the plan will revert to the traditional optimism in economic planning which gave way to a more conservative outlook in 1957-58.

Ideological tenets which have become outmoded since the last party congress in 1956, particularly those dealing with intrabloc relations, will probably be redefined.

The central committee plenum on 5 September which called the congress relieved former Premier Bulganin of his membership on the party presidium, thus formalizing his prolonged political decline. The situation in the Taiwan Straits may also have been discussed.

Several members of the presidium seem to have been away from Moscow during the plenum, raising the possibility that the decision to convene the congress was taken without the concurrence of its full membership.

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III. THE WEST

Venezuelan Military Coup Fails

The failure of a Venezuelan military coup on 7 September reflects the loyalty of the majority of the armed forces to junta President Larrazabal and the effectiveness of civilian strength as a check against a return to military rule. The revolt, which apparently was quickly suppressed, was led by officers recently exiled for involvement in the coup

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An elaborate civilian organization has been developed since the ouster of dictator Perez last January to ensure the election of a constitutional regime next November and to guard against future military dominance of the government. It consists of labor, student, and political groups, some of which are armed and all of which can be mobilized rapidly for a display of force. The responsible top leaders in the structure may not in the future be able to control the radical and unruly elements, which could convert the organization into a force of anarchy and violence.

The divided armed forces, apparently reluctant to clash openly with civilians, have suffered a substantial decline in prestige and power in recent months. The military may still unite for a violent showdown with civilian groups before or after elections, however, if they feel their role in government is seriously endangered or that the junta has become captive to periodic mob action.

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LATE ITEM

Khrushchev Warns That Attack on Communist China Will Be
Regarded as Attack on the USSR

Premier Khrushchev's letter of 7 September to President Eisenhower contains the strongest statement to date of Soviet support for the Chinese Communists in the Taiwan Strait crisis. Following a pointed warning against the danger of miscalculation, Khrushchev declared that "an attack on the Chinese People's Republic, which is a great friend, ally, and neighbor of our country, is an attack on the Soviet Union." He said that the USSR, "true to its duty," will "do everything," together with Peiping, "to defend the security of both states..." He warned that the Chinese People's Republic "has true friends ready to go to its aid at any moment in case of aggression...since the interests of the security of People's China are inseparable from the interests of the Soviet Union."

These blunt warnings are aimed at impressing upon world opinion the fact that the Soviet and Chinese Communist leaders are fully prepared for a major test of strength with the United States. Khrushchev probably believes these pronouncements will greatly increase the atmosphere of crisis throughout the world and induce America's allies and neutral governments, under pressure of public opinion, to bring heavy pressure on Washington to avoid any actions which might lead to large-scale hostilities.

Khrushchev's denunciation of American policy toward China and American actions in the Taiwan Strait crisis foreshadows the line of the Soviet attack in the forthcoming session of the UN General Assembly. The Soviet and Chinese Communist leaders probably believe they can exploit the Taiwan Strait crisis in an all-out effort to settle the question of Chinese representation at this session of the General Assembly. Khrushchev declared that "only the unrealistic position of the United States prevents the members of the UN from taking the only correct decision--to throw out the political corpse of the Chiang Kai-shek imposter and grant the representatives of great China their legal place in the UN."

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